

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /071 W
-----150908Z 035696 /12

R 150637Z MAR 77
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4281
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM IZ US
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS - IRAQI MEDIA ATTACK U.S. POSITIONS

1. FOR PAST SEVERAL WEEKS WE HAVE NOTED RISING TEMPO OF
CRITICISM BY IRAQI MEDIA OF POSITIONS TAKEN BY USG ON
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. ALMOST INVARIABLY, SUCH CRITICISM
ALLEGES THAT U.S. HAS POOR RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND
IS NOT ENTITLED TO POINT FINGER AT OTHERS.

2. THESE CRITIQUES ARE USUALLY STIMULATED BY SPECIFIC
CASES, SUCH AS HIGHLY PUBLICIZED USG SYMPATHY FOR SOVIET
DISSIDENTS. BAGHDAD OBSERVER OF MARCH 9, HOWEVER, HAS
MORE GENERAL ARTICLE ON SUBJECT. UNDER BYLINE OF "POLITICAL
SECTION", WHICH IS USUALLY SUGGESTIVE OF GOI INSPIRATION,
THE NEWSPAPER WRITES, "WE FIND IT DISGUSTING--TO BORROW
PRESIDENT CARTER'S EXPRESSION--THAT THE AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS,
OF ALL PEOPLE, SHOULD APPOINT THEMSELVES AS THE PIOUS
APOSTLES OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND INSTRUCTORS OF OTHER PEOPLES
IN THIS REGARD." ARTICLE GOES ON TO LIST ALLEGED U.S.
VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS--TREATMENT OF THE INDIANS,
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST BLACKS AND OTHER MINORITIES,
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AND SUPPORT OF "ZIONIST USURPATION OF PALESTINE" DEPRIVING
PALESTINIAN INHABITANTS OF BASIC RIGHTS. THE ARTICLE
CONCLUDES BY REMINDING ITS READERS THAT USG HAS NOT
ENDORSED THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION
OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND HAS FAILED TO
JOIN THE DECADE FOR ACTION TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL
DISCRIMINATION LAUNCHED BY THE UNGA IN 1972.

3. COMMENT: ARTICLE CONTAINS OBVIOUS DISTORTIONS OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND IGNORES PROGRESS MADE IN FIELD OF RACE RELATIONS. IRAQIS WHO HAVE STUDIED OR TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY IN THE U.S. RECOGNIZE THAT U.S. RECORD ON TREATMENT OF ITS ETHNIC MINORITIES IS MUCH BETTER THAN MEDIA HERE WILL EVER ADMIT. EVEN MOST SOPHISTICATED IRAQIS, HOWEVER, WOULD BE INCLINED TO AGREE WITH VIEW THAT U.S. POSITION ON PALESTINE QUESTION HAS IGNORED HUMAN RIGHTS AND MATERIAL ASPIRATIONS OF PALESTINIAN ARABS. NORTH AMERICAN DESK OFFICER AT FOREIGN MINISTRY, WHO IS UCLA GRADUATE AND WHO HAS SERVED AT U.N. IN NEW YORK, POINTEDLY TOLD EMBOFF RECENTLY THAT HE WOULD BE MORE IMPRESSED BY PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER TO ANDREI SAKHAROV IF PRESIDENT WOULD PUBLICLY EXPRESS SYMPATHY FOR PALESTINIANS NOW ON HUNGER STRIKE IN ISRAELI JAILS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BAGHDA00442
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770088-0354
Format: TEL
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770360/aaaacapb.tel
Line Count: 79
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4c3b7bb8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3112116
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HUMAN RIGHTS - IRAQI MEDIA ATTACK U.S. POSITONS
TAGS: SHUM, IZ, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4c3b7bb8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009